

Informational Genre Study **4th Grade**

Background Information: This study was developed for the use with fourth-grade classrooms that are already implementing the writers' workshop initiative. The intent of the study is to teach students to write in the informational genre. The study is most effective when the following assumptions are true:

Teacher Assumptions:

Prior to this unit of study, teacher preparation will include:

- Previewing genre study prior to classroom implementation.
- Selecting a topic of interest.
- Locating three sources: a magazine article, the Internet, and a reference book.
- Modeling for the students the entire process of informational writing. (The time frame/pace noted is only a suggestion; it will vary depending on individual classroom needs.)

Student Assumptions:

- Students have been exposed to the language of non-fiction.
- Students have been immersed in a variety of non-fiction structures by hearing a variety of nonfiction books read aloud the week prior to the beginning of the unit.
- Students know how to write engaging beginnings and endings taught in previous units throughout the year.
- Students have had experiences reading informational text.
- Students have had experience using rubrics.

Teaching Objectives:

Students will understand the features of informational text. Students will produce an informative piece that:

- Engages the reader by establishing a context
- Develops a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject
- Demonstrates an understanding of the characteristics of genre- specific literary works
- Utilizes appropriate expert sources including internet sources
- Anticipates readers questions and provides adequate background information for the reader
- Includes appropriate facts and details quoted from a text or in students own words as paraphrased
- Excludes extraneous inappropriate information
- Provides a sense of closure to the writing.



Sequence:

- Week 1: Students will be immersed in the informational genre of writing. Students will explore the attributes of nonfiction from a variety of sources, select a topic in which they are an expert and develop questions to aid in the research.
- Week 2: Students will begin searching for answers to the questions generated the prior week, remembering to use the sources. Students will select texts, get information from three sources-a magazine, the Internet, and a reference book. Students will then begin to establish a perspective and organizational structure for their own piece.
- Weeks 3&4: Students will begin drafting their piece, insuring that the readers' needs and questions are being addressed. They will include appropriate information, revisit the text, and insure that the characteristics of nonfiction are included.
- Week 5: 2 days generating rubrics followed by 3 days of publishing papers.



Informational Genre Study

4th Grade

Scope and Sequence

Week 1

- Lesson 1 – Immersion in Genre
- Lesson 2 – Identify Attributes of Informational Genre
- Lesson 3 – Identify Features of Informational Text
- Lesson 4 – T Chart
- Lesson 5 – Narrowing Your Focus

Week 2

- Lesson 6 – Focusing on Adding Depth to One Part of Information
- Lesson 7 – Putting Information Into Your Own Words (Paraphrasing)
- Lesson 8 - Looking at Resources – Immersions into Magazines
- Lesson 9 – Extracting Information from Magazines
- Lesson 10 – Immersion into Internet Sources

Week 3

- Lesson 11 – Extracting Information from Internet Sources
- Lesson 12 – Immersion into Reference Books
- Lesson 13 – Extracting Information from Reference Books
- Lesson 14 – Outlining the Beginning, Middle and End
- Lesson 15 – Extraneous Information (Leaving Out What the Reader Already Knows)

Week 4

- Lesson 16 – Describing the Subject
- Lesson 17 – Using Supporting Details and Examples
- Lesson 18 – Paragraph Writing and Using Topic Sentences
- Lesson 19 – Using Title and Subtitles to Organize
- Lesson 20 – Writing an Introduction

Week 5

- Lesson 21 – Ending With a Bang
- Lesson 22 – Writing a Rubric
- Lesson 23 – Publishing
- Lesson 24 – Publishing
- Lesson 25 – Celebration



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 1- Immersion in Genre
Lesson 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will be immersed in informational genre.

TEKS: 4.13 a-h; 4.15 a,c; 4.23 a,b; 4.24 a

Materials Needed:

- Chart tablet, markers
- Variety of sources (magazines, internet and reference books)
- Touchstone informational texts
- Writers' Notebook

Before the Lesson:

Teacher will gather an assortment of informational texts and immerse students in the genre. Students will become familiar with the terminology and attributes of informational text.

Mini Lesson:

Connections:

Remind students that informational text is used to provide information and to establish a perspective on a subject. Information can be found in a variety of sources.

Teach and Chart:

Teacher and students will create a chart titled, "Where Informational Text Can Be Found".

Suggestions:

- Read aloud texts
- Children's magazines (Zillions, Consumer Reports, World- National Geographic, Sports Illustrated for Kids, Boy's Life, Ranger Rick, Zebecs, Nickelodeon, Kids Discover, Reading Rainbow, etc.)
- Toy packages, snack foods, clothing ads, travel brochures
- Editorials, letters to the editor
- Book jackets
- Informational books

Active Involvement:

Preview assorted articles

Begin to examine assorted text

Link:

Students will begin to explore their topic of interest and record ideas in their Writer's Notebook.

Closure:

Students will gather at the carpet to discuss what they learned about informational genre.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 1- Identify Attributes of Informational Genre
Lesson 2

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will identify the attributes of the informational genre.

TEKS: 4.13 a-h; 4.15 a, c; 4.23 a, b; 4.24 a

Materials Needed:

- Chart tablet, markers
- Touchstone texts
- Writers' Notebook
- Attribute chart
- Teacher's article of interest

Before the Lesson:

Teacher does a Read Aloud of an informational article that includes some attributes of that genre.

Mini Lesson:

Connections:

Teacher states that the texts examined yesterday had many similarities with the informational article read aloud today.

Teach and Active Involvement:

Teacher and students will create a chart listing the attributes of the informational genre.
A second chart maybe necessary to separate features of informational writing.

Attributes of Informational Writing (Sample Chart)

- Has supporting details/examples
- Has a lead that develops readers interest
- Provides a sense of closure
- Has a title (which reflects a controlling idea that conveys perspectives on the selected topic)
- Organizing Structure (beginning, middle & end, topic sentence, paragraphs, subtitles, excludes extraneous information
- Focus on topic
- Features of Informational Text (optional)



Link:

Students will explore other informational texts, searching for charted attributes and any others they might find.

Closure:

Teacher gathers students together to continue adding attributes and noticings that occurred during exploration.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 1- Features of Informational Genre
Lesson 3

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will identify the features of informational text.

TEKS: 4.13 a, b, c, d, f, h; 4.23 a, b

Materials Needed:

- Chart Tablet, markers
- Touchstone texts
- Writer's Notebook

Before Lesson:

Teacher gathers various informational texts that will demonstrate many of the features that you will be charting.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Teacher reminds students that informational text features can help readers understand the text better.

Teach:

Teacher and students will create a chart listing the features of informational genre by looking at the informational touchstone texts.

Features of Informational Genre			
Print Features		Graphic Aids	
font	captions	sketches	graphs
print	labels	tables	maps
bullets	heading	figures	
titles			
Organizational Aids		Illustrations	
table of contents	index	colored photographs	
preface		labeled drawings	
glossary		cross sections	

Active Involvement and Link:

Students will write down features in their writers' notebook and explore other informational text searching and studying features.

Closure: Teacher gathers students together to continue adding attributes and noticings that occurred during exploration.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 1- Generating Topics and Questions
Lesson 4

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will list topics they are familiar with and generate questions about the topics.

TEKS: 4.13 a, b, c, d, f, h; 4.23 a, b; 4.21 a,b,f; 4.22 a

Materials Needed:

Chart paper and markers
Teacher's writers' notebook
Writers' notebooks

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Teacher reminds students that writers write from their interests and experiences. When thinking about a topic, it is a good idea to list things you know something about in order to come up with good questions.

Teach:

Using a T-chart and your writer's notebook, model how you make a list of topics you have prior knowledge on (Things I Know) and questions to investigate (Things I Want to Learn).

<u>Things I Know</u>	<u>Things I Want to Learn</u>

Active Involvement:

Discuss with a partner topics they have some knowledge about and questions they would like to investigate.

Link:

Students create their own T-chart in their writers' notebook and write several things they know and would like to learn more about.

Closure: Students will gather at the carpet to share with a partner their topic lists in Writer's Notebooks



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 1- Narrowing Your Focus (Selecting a Topic)
Lesson 5

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will select a topic that is manageable in size and scope.

TEKS: 4.13 a, b, f; 4.23 a, b

Materials Needed:

- Chart tablet, markers
- Writers' Notebook
- *Poison Dart Frogs* by Jennifer Owings Dewey
- or any text with a very specific topic
- *Non-Fiction Craft Lessons* by Ralph Fletcher

Before Lesson:

Teacher draws attention to the T-chart students created in their notebooks.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

The teacher will inform students that they will publish an informational piece on a specific topic.

Teach and Active Involvement:

- The teacher will model how to narrow a topic that is very broad and/or general from lesson #4. Teacher can model using his/her T-chart and list of "Things I Know" to narrow a broad/general topic. Topics may include hobbies, places of interest, historical events, etc. Make sure the list contains some broad subjects that need to be narrowed. Also include subjects that are too narrow and need to be expanded.
- Teacher may want to use *Non-Fiction Craft Lessons*, p.55. (Ex: the author of *Poison Dart Frogs* could have started with a topic like amphibians, then narrowed it to frogs, and finally the poison dart frog.)
- Once teacher selects a topic from these, he/she will demonstrate how to make a web, narrowing it if it is too broad or expanding it if it is too narrow. From that web, the teacher will circle the topic of interest for research.

Link:

The students will choose their own topics to research for their report by following same procedure.

Closure:

Students gather at the carpet to share the topics they chose.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 2 - Focusing On Adding Depth to One Part of Information
Lesson 6

Mini-Lesson Goal:

Students will move from writing about a topic in general and focus on one.

TEKS: 4.13 a; 4.15 a, c, e

Materials Needed:

- Suggested Books – *A Caribou Journey* by Debbie S. Miller or *Arlene Sardine* by Christopher Raschka or any other informational text that focuses on one topic (ex. Blue Whales as opposed to Whales)
- Chart paper
- Markers
- Writer's Notebook
- *Non-Fiction Craft Lessons* by Joann Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher

Before the Lesson:

Read one of the suggested books or any other informational text that focuses on one topic (ex. Blue Whales as opposed to Whales)

Mini-Lesson:

Connections:

Remind students that yesterday you talked about narrowing your topic and today we will take the focus a step further.

Teach and Chart:

- The teacher will model how to focus on a part of information from the topic. Students have researched and have gathered lots of facts about their subject. These facts may be very important, but don't forget that it's hard for readers to focus their minds around all this information.
- The teacher will suggest one way students can deal with this problem. Instead of writing about his/her subject in general, select one animal, one person, or one thing you can write about. To do that, students need to create a few scenes in which it can be described.
- The teacher and students take another look at the book *A Caribou Journey* (or any other book you have chosen.) Teacher points out that the author could have simply provided a list of facts about caribou. Instead, she begins by describing one caribou mother with her son.

Active Involvement:

Turn to a partner and tell him/her your topic and what are some possibilities for focusing on one aspect (ex. King Cobras- focusing on one – the process on how a King Cobra eats)



Link:

Today students will reread their material and decide on a focus. They will want to bring their topic to life and not just list facts. They will also create a scene in which the topic is described.

Closure:

Students gather at the carpet. Several students share the focus they took in describing their subject.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 2 – Putting Information Into Your Own Words (Paraphrasing)
Lesson 7

Mini-Lesson Goal:

Students will become familiar with taking notes by paraphrasing and not copying information directly.

TEKS: 4.13 e, g; 4.15 a; 4.19 a
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Materials Needed:

- Copy for every student of selected informational text pieces that show an original entry from a reference source, a paraphrased summary and an elaborated rewritten piece
- Transparency of the selected written examples
- Over head projector
- Vis-a-vis markers

Before the Lesson:

Select a short excerpt from a reference source. Type it verbatim from the source. Write a brief summary using paraphrased words and sentences. Then, write a more elaborated version that includes paraphrasing and the addition of more information that answers questions posed, etc.

Mini-Lesson:

Connections:

Remind students that yesterday everyone narrowed their focus by describing and creating a scene. Before students head off to gather and collect their information discuss the way to take notes, focusing on paraphrasing information.

Teach and Chart:

- The class reads the selected text pieces.
- Begin by reading the original text from a resource book. Then read the section that has been rewritten, but has added nothing else.
- Discuss with students how the only thing that changed was putting the information into your own words and summarizing it. Also discuss how it was difficult for the reader to read because it lacked voice and demonstrated how very little someone had learned.
- Next, read together the section where that included facts but has added much more including voice.



Active Involvement:

Students will turn to their partner and discuss what was noticed about the second writing piece. Point out that the second writing contained all of the original information, relevant experiences, thoughts, new information. The second piece included explanations, connections and questioning.

Link:

Today as students look through books, magazines, reference texts they will paraphrase information found (Not simply rewriting information in his/her own words.)

Closure:

Students will gather at the carpet. Several students will share the information straight from the resource and their own paraphrase. Students sharing will need to bring with them his/her writers notebook and a resource used.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 2 - Looking at Resources (Magazine)
Lesson 8

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will skim and scan information from a magazine article to answer questions/wonderings related to their topic.

TEKS: 4.1; 4.2 a,d; 4.7; 4.8 b,c; 4.10; 4.11; 4.12 b-d,j; 4.13

Materials Needed:

- Transparency of a magazine article related to the class topic that contains subheadings and a variety of “features” (article may or may not answer questions on T-chart)
- Copy of the magazine article for every student (same as transparency.)
- Overhead projector
- Overhead markers
- Class T-chart
- Highlighters (optional)

Before the Lesson:

Teacher will gather magazine articles that provide examples of text that answer and don’t answer questions from class T-chart.

Mini Lesson

Connections:

Teacher will inform students that they will research their topic using questions from their t-chart and an article related to a specific topic. They will learn to skim and scan for information.

Teach / Active Involvement:

- 1) Review questions “Things I Want to Learn” from class T-chart
- 2) Using the magazine article transparency, read aloud the text searching for answers. Teacher models skimming and scanning procedures by looking at “subheadings.”
- 3) Teacher models how a researcher uses the “features” in an article to acquire information relevant to questions.
- 4) Students will underline/highlight subheadings and/or features (mimicking teacher) that might target information relevant to questions.
- 5) Model to students, samples of articles related to the topic but failing to hold information necessary to answer questions. (Students should know that not all resources obtain information that will answer their questions although resource deals with topic.)

Link:

Students are to begin researching a magazine resource that targets their topic. They are to skim and scan subheadings and features to identify whether that particular article has information that would answer their own personal questions on their topic.

Closure:

Students gather at the carpet to discuss success and problems in their research. (At this point, the teacher will determine which students need additional time for research.)



Note to teacher:

Classroom or teacher should have magazines that relate to assorted topics. Class might have to check out from library. This may be timely and may require time to find appropriate magazines/articles. The target is to have students research three resources. If for some reason students fail to find a magazine article, he/she may use an informational book.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 2 – Extracting Information from a Magazine
Lesson 9

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will extract information from a magazine article related to their topic of interest.

TEKS: 4.1 a-c; 4.2 a,d; 4.7; 4.8 b,c; 4.10 a-l ; 4.11 a-d ; 4.12 b-d, j;

Materials Needed:

- Transparency of magazine article that contains information related to class topic
- Copy of the magazine article for every student (same as transparency.)
- Data Collection Organizer
- Overhead projector
- Overhead markers
- Class T-chart
- Post-its
- Highlighters (optional)

Before the Lesson:

Teacher will gather magazine articles that provide information on class topic

Mini Lesson

Connections:

In today's world, it is extremely important that students be able to extract information from their research source to write an informational piece.

Teach / Active Involvement:

- 1) Teacher will remind students of paraphrasing techniques.
- 2) Review questions "Things I Want to Learn" from class T-chart
- 3) Using the magazine article transparency, read aloud the text searching for information. Teacher and students will determine important facts in the article and highlight them in order to gain a deeper understanding of the information presented.
- 4) As a class, underline and paraphrase sections one at a time. Each paraphrase will be jotted on the "Information Found" section of the Data Collection Organizer (one per source).

Link:

Students are to begin identifying pertinent information from their magazine source. They are to paraphrase and jot down their information on the "Information Found" section of the Data Collection Organizer.

Closure:

Students will gather at the carpet and individually share one piece of information they found in their research (popcorn share).

Note to teacher:

Students could write on their copy of the article. However, students should use post-its to avoid writing on actual magazine unless a copy of student's personal article is provided to each student.



DATA COLLECTION ORGANIZER

Research Source: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____ Pages: _____

Restated information found:_____

Questions Answered: _____



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 2 - Looking at Resources (Internet)
Lesson 10

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will skim and scan information from an Internet source to answer questions/wonderings related to their topic.

TEKS: 4.1; 4.2a,d; 4.7; 4.8b,c; 4.9c; 4.10; 4.11; 4.12 b-d,j; 4.13

Materials Needed:

- Transparency of an internet source that contains subheadings and variety of “features” (related to class topic, some may not answer questions but may contain topic information)
- Copy of the Internet source for every student (same as transparency.)
- Overhead projector
- Overhead markers
- Class T-chart
- Highlighters (optional)

Before the Lesson:

Expose students to Internet browsing and searching.

Teacher will gather Internet sources that provide examples of text that answer and don’t answer questions from class T-chart. Ideally this lesson should be done in a computer lab or using an Internet connected computer in the classroom.

Mini Lesson

Connections:

Teacher will inform students that they will research their topic using questions from their T-chart and an article related to a specific topic. They will learn to skim and scan the Internet for information. Point out the similarities of text features and genre attributes on the Internet to printed texts.

Teach / Active Involvement:

- 1) Review questions “Things I Want to Learn” from class T-chart
- 2) Using an Internet source transparency, read aloud text searching for answers. Teacher models skimming and scanning procedures by looking at “subheadings.”
- 3) Teacher models how a researcher uses the “features” in an article to acquire information relevant to questions.
- 4) Students will underline/highlight subheadings and/or features (mimicking teacher) that might target information relevant to questions.
- 5) Model to students, samples of articles related to the topic but failing to hold information necessary to answer questions. (Students should know that not all resources obtain information that will answer their questions although they may deal with topic.)

Link:

Students are to begin researching internet sources that target their topic. They are to skim and scan subheadings and features to identify whether that particular source has information that would answer their own personal questions to their topic.



Closure:

Students will gather at the carpet and discuss how they determined which articles were and were not useful.

Note to teacher:

Teacher should provide students opportunities to browse the Internet and find sources that deal with their topic. Classes might make arrangements to get training/lessons on browsing and narrowing the topic via Internet. This may be a timely process and may required extra time to find appropriate articles of certain topic. It is recommended that once an article is found, an additional article should be printed just in case the first failed to provide much information. The target is to have students research three resources. If for some reason students fail to find an Internet source, he/she may use an informational book.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 3 – Extracting Information from a Internet Source
Lesson 11

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will extract information from an Internet source related to their topic of interest.

TEKS: 4.1; 4.2 a,d; 4.7; 4.8 b,c; 4.10; 4.11; 4.12 b-d,j; 4.13

Materials Needed:

- Transparency of Internet source that contains information related to class' topic
- Copies of an Internet article for every student (same as transparency.)
- Data Collection Organizer
- Overhead projector
- Overhead markers
- Class T-chart
- Highlighters (optional)

Before the Lesson:

Teacher will gather various Internet sources that provide information on class' topic

Mini Lesson

Connections:

In today's world, it is extremely important that students be able to extract information from their research source to write an informational piece.

Teach / Active Involvement:

- 1) Teacher will remind students of paraphrasing techniques.
- 2) Review questions "Things I Want to Learn" from class T-chart
- 3) Using an Internet article transparency, read aloud text searching for information. Teacher and students will determine important facts in the article and highlight them in order to gain a deeper understanding of the information presented.
- 4) As a class, underline and paraphrase sections at a time. Each paraphrase will be jotted on the "Information Found" section of the second Data Collection Organizer (one per source).

Link:

Students are to begin identifying pertinent information from within their Internet sources. They are to paraphrase and jot down their information on the "Information Found" section of the Data Collection Organizer.

Closure:

Students will gather at the carpet and share one important fact or piece of data found on the Internet.

Note to teacher:

Students will have own print out copies of Internet sources. Try to have more than one or two Internet sources since it is a timely process to research further.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 3 - Looking at Resources (Reference Book)
Lesson 12

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will skim and scan information from a reference book to answer questions/wonderings related to their topic.

TEKS: 4.1; 4.2 a-d; 4.7; 4.8 b, c; 4.9 c; 4.10; 4.11; 4.12 b-d, j; 4.13
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Materials Needed:

- Transparency of a page from a reference book containing information relevant to topic (related to class topic, some may not answer questions but may contain topic information)
- Copies of the reference page for every student (same as transparency.)
- Overhead projector
- Overhead markers
- Class T-chart
- Highlighters (optional)

Before the Lesson:

Have students familiarized with the use of reference books.

Teacher will gather several reference books that provide examples of text that answer and don't answer questions from class T-chart.

Mini Lesson

Connections:

Teacher will inform students that they will research their topic using questions from their t-chart using a reference book. Students will identify the similarities and differences to those of other sources (magazines/internet).

Teach / Active Involvement:

- 1) Review questions "Things I Want to Learn" from class t-chart
- 2) Using the transparency page from a reference book, read aloud the text searching for answers. Teacher models skimming and scanning procedures of designated area where information is being presented related to topic.
- 3) Teacher models how a researcher uses the information presented within the page to acquire information relevant to questions.
- 4) Students will underline/highlight pertinent information that might target questions.
- 5) Model to students, samples of reference pages related to the topic but failing to hold information necessary to answer questions. (Students should know that not all resources obtain information that will answer their questions although they may deal with topic.)

Link:

Students are to begin using reference books to research their personal topic. They are to skim and scan the page where information is found related to topic.

Closure:

Students will gather at the carpet and share how this new source of information differs from the other resources.



Note to teacher:

Teacher should provide students opportunities to browse reference books. Assure that students are provided with a variety of sources that meet students' reading level. Children's reference books are recommended. Lessons should be provided to allow students to familiarize themselves with reference materials. The target is to have students research three resources. If for some reason students fail to find an internet source, he/she may use an informational book.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 3 – Extracting Information from a Reference Book
Lesson 13

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will extract information from a reference book.

TEKS: 4.1; 4.2 a, d; 4.7; 4.8 b, c; 4.10; 4.11; 4.12 b-d, j; 4.13

Materials Needed:

- Transparency of a page from a reference book containing information relevant to topic
- Copies of reference page for every student (same as transparency.)
- Data Collection Organizer
- Overhead projector
- Overhead markers
- Class T-chart
- Post-its
- Highlighters (optional)

Before the Lesson:

Teacher will gather various reference materials that contain information on class' topic

Mini Lesson

Connections:

In today's world, it is extremely important that students be able to extract information from their research source to write an informational piece.

Teach / Active Involvement:

- 1) Teacher will remind students of paraphrasing techniques.
- 2) Review questions "Things I Want to Learn" from class T-chart
- 3) Using the transparency page from a reference book, read aloud text searching for information. Teacher and students will determine important facts in the article and highlight them in order to gain a deeper understanding of the information presented.
- 4) As a class, underline and paraphrase sections at a time. Each paraphrase will be jotted on the "Information Found" section of the third Data Collection Organizer (one per source).

Link:

Students are to begin identifying pertinent information from within their reference sources. They are to paraphrase and jot down their information on the "Information Found" section of the Data Collection Organizer.

Closure:

Students will gather at the carpet to share one important piece of data found in reference books.

Note to teacher:

Students may use post-its to write on, rather than writing on actual book. If attainable, students may make copies of reference page where information related to their topic is evident.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 3 – Organizing Information Beginning, Middle, End
Lesson 14

Mini-Lesson Goal:

Students will take the information they have gathered and organize it into the beginning, middle and end.

TEKS: 4.13 e; 4.15 c; 4.19 a, b

Materials Needed:

- Sample graphic organizer
- Chart paper
- Markers

Before the Lesson:

- Make a copy of the graphic organizer for every student.
- Create your sample chart on a transparency or on chart paper
- Write out your notes in the brainstorming column.

Mini-Lesson:

Connections:

Remind students about all the information they have been gathering on the data collection sheets. This information at the moment has no structure. They will be working on structure for their written piece.

Teach and Chart:

- The teacher will share one way to organize information before writing a draft. Have students look at the chart.
- The teacher has written notes (from data collection sheets that have been used for modeling) in the brainstorming column.
- Next, read each note and think about whether it should go in the beginning, the middle, or the end of the paper. (Demonstrate this in front of students, using arrows to show where each bit of information belongs.) Continue this process with all of your notes except for the last four.

Brainstorming	Beginning	Middle	End



Active Involvement:

Students should turn to a partner and talk about where they think the last four notes go. Ask for students to give you their input. Come to a consensus. Choose four students to go up to the chart and draw the arrows.

Link:

Today if you are ready to use this strategy there are copies of this chart in the writing area.

Closure:

Students gather at the carpet. Have several students tell how they have organized their notes into a structure of beginning, middle and end.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 3 -Extraneous Information – Leaving Out What the Reader Already Knows
Lesson 15

Mini-Lesson Goal:

Students will revise their written piece to remove extraneous information.

TEKS: 4.13 a, f; 4.15 a, c; 4.19 c

Materials Needed:

- Copies of an excerpt or a short article from a magazine that contains information that is commonly known about a subject
- Clipboards (for students)
- Pencils (for students)

Before the Lesson:

Make copies of the selected article or excerpt for every student and the teacher. Students will need to bring a pencil and clipboard or a folder to write on.

Mini-Lesson:

Connections:

Remind students that yesterday they worked on beginning, middle, and end. The focus for today will be to go back and look at the information written and take out extraneous information.

Teach and Chart:

- Informational writing draws on a connection between three things, the writer, topic, and the reader. There's an unwritten contract between the writer and reader that states: *I'll keep reading your writing so long as you teach me about your subject and keep me interested.* One sure way to bore the reader is to tell them what they already know.
- Take a look at the article.
- Read the article out loud.

Active Involvement:

Have students turn to a partner and read the piece again. Have students put brackets around information that made them say to themselves, "I already knew that!" Discuss what parts students bracketed? Point out to students how much stronger this piece would have been if the author had left out those parts already known.

Link:

Think about this as you return to your writing. Reread your writing. Have you included parts that readers already know? If so, you may be able to cut it. Remember: removing those parts shouldn't make your report shorter. Instead, it gives you a chance to go deeper, to tell about the interesting parts.



Closure:

Students gather at the carpet. Several students share the process of going back and taking out extraneous information. Discuss how this process has lifted the level of the writing.



Informational Genre Study
Grade 4
Week 4 – Describing the Subject
Lesson 16

Mini Lesson Goal:

*Students will take time to **describe** the person, animal, place or historical event, etc., they are writing about in order to help them enhance their readers understanding.*

Materials Needed:

- Selection of informational text (suggested selections, Lincoln: A Photo biography, by Russell Freedman, Dakota Dugout by Ana Turner, or any other source that describes its subject)
- Transparency marker
- Overhead transparency of research source

Before the Lesson:

Teacher will revisit the article selected, noting the ways in which the author took steps to enhance the readers understanding.

Give students the opportunity to reread their collected information (related to the topic) prior to the designated Writers Workshop time.

Mini Lesson

Connections:

In today's world it is extremely important that our students be able to write clearly and descriptively in order to communicate their thinking.

Teach:

Teacher will tell students that they have done a lot of research. Sometimes when you have spent lots of time researching, you get to that point when you can picture exactly what you're writing about. It is very easy for the writer to forget the readers, who have not done the research, so you need to help them get a "mind picture" of your topic.

1. Lead students through the selected informational text, pointing out how the authors describe their subjects.
2. As a group, determine which sentences, phrases and words create pictures in peoples mind.
3. Highlight the findings.

Active Involvement:

Give students a challenge. Ask them to go back to the working area and reread their own informational writing, research and see if what they have written describes their subject and "paint pictures with words" Teacher will confer with selected students to assist them in improving their informational research.

Teacher Note: When pointing out "painting pictures in people's minds" teachers can reinforce syntax.

Examples: verbs, strong adjectives, compound and complex sentences

Caution: Lesson is not a grammar lesson, it is describing the subject



Link:

Students will begin to notice details and examples that need to be clarified for the read or that might need improvement.

Closure:

Let students share some of their descriptions they revised.



Informational Genre Study
Grade 4
Week 4-Details and Examples
Lesson 17

Mini-Lesson Goal:

Students will be able to identify big ideas that are supported by details and concrete examples.

TEKS: 4.13e, f, h; 4.15 a, c; 4.19c; 4.20 a, c

Materials Needed:

- Suggested reading text : *Animal Dads* by Sneed B. Collard III or any other informational text that demonstrates big ideas and supporting details
- Informational Article
- Overhead transparency of article
- Overhead marker

Before the Lesson: The teacher should review chosen text and note the findings that may reflect as details and examples.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Tell students that by providing supporting details, students can ground their writing in the real world.

Teach:

Share with students that when they support their statements with evidence, it gives authority to their writing.

- Demonstrate a weak piece of informational writing that lacks supporting details and examples
- Engage students in a conversation about unsupported statements.
- Invite students to listen to your selected informational text and ask them to focus on how the author backs up his/her statements with examples. Look for concrete details when reading and discussing.

Active Involvement:

- Ask students to revisit their writing.
- Ask the question “Have you done what the author (choose author’s name) did?”
- If they are just beginning to write, tell them to remember to back up their ideas with enough examples.

Teacher Note:

Conference with students who need the extra help (Big concept). Elements of writer’s craft that develop readers’ interest may include: questions, highlighted text, quotations, interesting facts or data.



Link:

Students will learn to omit underdeveloped writing.

Closure:

Students can share specific details or examples that correctly correspond and support the big ideas.



Informational Genre Study
4th Grade
Week 4- Writing a Paragraph and a Topic Sentence
Lesson 18

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will apply the organizational tools of paragraphs and topic sentences to help them develop their ideas.

TEKS: 4:10 f,g; 4:19 h; 4:20 c; 4.22 a

Materials Needed:

- A prepared text to show paragraphs and topic sentence techniques
- Overhead Transparency of the text
- Overhead Highlighters

Before the Lesson:

Give opportunities to students to discuss what a paragraph and a topic sentence are and why they think they use them in their own writing. Prepare 2 pieces of the same informational text. One should be continuous text, the other should be written with paragraphing and topic sentences.

Mini Lesson:

Connections:

Tell students that mentor authors, and good writers in general, use paragraphs and topic sentences as organizational tools which allow for the writers to clear about what they think and feel.

Teach and Chart:

Place the prepared text on an overhead projector.

- Ask students to look at both pages. Point out that they say exactly the same thing, but before they read either one they need to think about which one they would select to read. Most students would select the one with paragraphs because it looks easier to read. The paragraphs give readers a break and help organize the information.
- Each paragraph has a central idea. Reread the text and stop at each paragraph. Discuss the topic or central idea.
- Help students by circling each paragraph and write key words or a phrase that can lead to a topic sentence. The topic sentence tells what the rest of the paragraph will be about.
- Then show students how the rest of the paragraph continues to explain more about the sentence.
- Then point out that when a new idea will be introduced, a new topic sentence is needed and the rest of that paragraph will explain more about that topic sentence.



Active Involvement and Link:

Encourage students to explore, explain and verify that the paragraphs connect to the topic sentence. They will return to their drafts and try to organize their information into paragraphs and write a topic sentence that gives the big idea. They should focus on one thing (ex: the kinds of foods your animal eats), then indent and begin with a new topic sentence

Closure:

Students gather to share revisions and justify the changes.



Informational Genre Study
Grade 4
Week 4 – Using Titles/Subtitles to Organize Information
Lesson 19

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will identify subtitles to create an organizing structure and determine their controlling idea. Students will also determine what the best title/subtitle is for their research.

TEKS: 4.14 a-c; 4.19 a, c; 4.20 e; 4.21 b

Materials Needed:

- Information article or book with good titles/subtitles (1 for each group or partner)
- Information article or book without title/subtitles (1 for each group or partner)
- Overhead transparencies of each research source

Before the Lesson:

Give students opportunity to discuss with their peers (in partners or response groups) possible titles and subtitles for their categories and reasons to justify their choices. Remind students that topic sentence can aid them with their choices.

Mini Lesson:

Connections:

Using their subtitles, students will begin to make connections between their details/subtitles and their controlling idea. They will also begin to identify a title.

Teach:

Teacher will demonstrate an interesting title and subtitles to demonstrate how they can grab the readers' attention and make them want to read on.

- Model naming subtitles for each paragraph.
- Identify the controlling idea by evaluating subtitle connections.
- Give students a copy of an article without subtitles. Have them work in pairs or groups to come up with title and subtitles.
- Share and discuss findings.

Active Involvement:

Students will follow the same procedure modeled by the teacher to determine their own controlling idea.

Closure:

Students will gather at the carpet and share some of their titles and subtitles, and why they chose them.



Informational Genre Study
Grade 4
Week 4 – Writing a Lead
Lesson 20

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will be able to develop an effective lead that is stated in a simple, but a very concise form that tells what the piece is all about.

Materials Needed:

- Sample pieces of informational text that have varied and strong introductions or leads
- Overhead transparency
- Chart Tablet
- Markers
-

Before the Lesson:

Teacher needs to pre select an article that has an engaging lead. Note the crafting tools used by the mentor author (News: who, what where, when, why, Questioning, Setting, Fact)

Mini Lesson

Connections:

Teacher will share with students that a lead is closely connected to the information based on the paragraphs and topic sentence.

Teach:

Teacher will tell students that a lead is the first tempting bite the reader gets from the writing. Tell the students that if the lead is dull, boring and tasteless, the reader will stop reading. Here are some leads that are effective and engaging

- Demonstrate the selected leads
- Allow students to read and discuss in groups what they notice
- Help them identify the different types of leads
- Share and chart the noticings
- Tell them that the introduction they write should do these things:
 1. Explain your purpose for writing it.
 2. State the main ideas that will follow.
 3. Get your reader interested.

Active Involvement:

Tell students to get into partners and talk about which lead might work better for their own writing.

Ask students to come up with a strong lead that works for their own pieces.



Link:

Students will begin to identify the components found in a good lead. Create a chart with these attributes.

Closure:

Choose three or four students to share their new leads.



Informational Genre Study
Grade 4
Week 5 –Ending with a Bang (closure, conclusion)
Lesson 21

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will be able to write an ending that brings closure to the topic.

TEKS: 4.13 g; 4.19 d, e, f, g

Materials Needed:

- 1 copy for each student of a selected article with a powerful ending
- Highlighters for student copies or post-its

Before the Lesson:

Locate and select several examples of informational text that have varied ending or conclusions.

Mini Lesson:

Connections:

Tell the students that endings are tough in informational text genre because of “frontloading” at the beginning of their pieces. As a result of “frontloading”, the ending may be very weak. Tell students that they have been working on leads but endings are just as important. The ending will be the part that will stay with the reader when they are finished reading.

Teach:

- Share with students the selected article
- Ask students to read along as teacher reads article aloud.
Discuss the attributes of the ending.

Active Involvement:

Today as you write, think about your ending. You might want to consider stating a fact, using a quote, or an image so that you can use it to fashion a strong ending.

Teacher Note:

Be careful that students don’t “front load” so much information that by the end of the piece, they have run out of things to say.

Link: Students will follow the model of the teacher in order to create an explosive ending.

Closure:

Students gather at the carpet and share their endings using “popcorn share”.



Informational Study
Grade 4
Week 5-Creating a Rubric
Lesson 22

Mini-Lesson Goal:

Students will create a rubric and publish their informational piece

TEKS: 4.20 a, c

Materials Needed:

- Attribute chart, *Attributes* (Week 1 Lesson 2)
- Rubric, *Attributes of Informational Writing* (taught previously in year)

Before the Lesson: Review the **sample** *Informational Rubric* (See attached sample rubric) and prepare blank rubric for the class.

Informational Writing				
	4	3	2	1

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Tell students that today they'll be developing a rubric to assess their drafts.

Teach, Part 1: Remind students to use attribute charts in their development of the rubric. Review previous charts the class has created in this unit of study.

Sample charts:

Attributes of Informational Writing

- Has supporting details/ examples
- Has a lead that develops reader interest
- Provides a sense of closure
- Has a title (which reflects a controlling that conveys persepective on the selected topic
- Organizing structure (beginnig, middle, end, topic sentences, paragraph, subtitles, excludes extraneous information)
- Provides sense of closure
- Focus on topic
- Features of Informational Text (optional, see lesson 3)

Active Involvement: Gather on the carpet with their selected drafts to begin creating a rubric for *Nonfiction Informational*.



Teach Part2: Tell the students that today they will begin to generate a rubric for informational writing. The rubric will build on what they already know is fundamental to good writing (see sample chart above).

Remind students that all year they've been working to include all of these things in their writing. Explain that today the class will build a rubric, which acknowledges all this prior learning and incorporates some special things that writers do when they write a good informational piece.

Display the blank *Informational* rubric grid.

Nonfiction Informational Writing				
	4	3	2	1

Draw students' attention to the noticing about how all informational writing begins with the authors' perspective. Therefore, the logical first criterion on the rubric might be how the work begins. Have students help you put into words what a really good beginning:

- Has a strong lead that makes a reader want to read more and mentions the perspective of the writer.
- A less good lead might not attempt to build the readers interest but may just provide the writers perspective on a topic
- A still less effective lead might not attempt to build readers interest
- A response that needs serious revisions might not have an introduction at all and just start with just the facts.

Now have the students look at the piece they have brought to the rug. Ask them to consider whether their beginning is a "4" – or a "3" or a "2" or a "1". Explain that if they need to revise their work upward towards a "4" they should look carefully at the rubric for cues about what to put in their beginning. Explain also that most papers will have some good attributes of informational writing, while other papers may lack those attributes. Remind them that their job as writers is to use the rubric to figure out what they did well and then to work at making better the things they didn't. The rubric is an important tool to use when planning and revising their piece.

At this point, go to the next attribute on the rubric. Complete the rubric during the next class session.



Lesson 2

Continuation of Day 1:

Be sure to use students' own language in creation of the rubric. Complete all levels of the rubric with you students.

Teacher Note:

Rubric construction may require all of two class sessions, leaving no time for in-class writing. On those days, be sure students write at home to continue the norm of daily writing. They should work on their drafts.

Sample Grid

Sample Rubric for Nonfiction Informational*

	4	3	2	1
Lead & Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Has a strong lead that makes the reader want to read more, and mentions the writers perspective on issueHas an effective closing that fully supports perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Has a good lead might not attempt to build reader interest, but does have a perspectiveHas effective ending that ties back into the perspective but does not provide any additional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Has a less effective lead, perspective is vagueEnding does not tie back to perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides no lead or perspectiveNo closure provided
Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Has an apparent consistent organizationProvides details to support writers perspective			
Supports Perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides enough supporting detailsExcludes extraneous informationProvides only appropriate informationSufficient use of research sourcesConsiders needs of readerProvides several attributes of nonfiction informational genre			

* This partial rubric is written as a guide for the teacher, to help you get started. Be sure to create your rubric with the students. The rubric should be in student language



Informational Genre Study
Grade 4
Week 5 –Publishing and Celebration
Lessons 23, 24, & 25

Goal:

Students will complete and publish a *Nonfiction Informational* piece by the end of the week

TEKS: 4.20 d, e; 4.21 e, f; 4.23 a; 4.25 a, b
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Materials Needed for this Unit:

- Previous charts and the rubric
- Computers if available
- Any other materials needed to publish

Connection:

Remind students that they have previously published in other writing genres. Emphasize that as writers, our goal is to produce a polished piece.

Teach And Active Involvement:

Continue using the writing workshop format. Be sure to complete the steps of the writing process, including:

- Revising
- Conferring
- Editing
- Final draft/publishing

Once students have published, the whole class celebrates.

